

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated October 17, 2008, claims 1-7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite.

In claim 3, a typographical error was noted, which has now been corrected.

With regard to independent claim 1, the Examiner maintained the objection to the use of the term "router" therein. Applicant continues to believe that the usage of this term in this context is proper, however, the only important feature that is relevant to the subject matter of the invention is that there be some component or method step wherein a communication connection is established between the external device and the remote service location, or the remote access interface, and that this communication path proceed through the permanently installed medical imaging apparatus. Whether the component that is responsible for producing this communication path is designated as a "router" is immaterial, as long as some component produces that communication path. Claim 1 has therefore been amended to refer to the control unit as being configured to temporarily produce this communication path, and therefore this basis for rejecting claims 1-7 under Section 112, second paragraph is moot.

Claims 1, 8, 11 and 12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiraishi in view of Gregerson et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed for the following reasons.

The apparatus and methods disclosed and claimed in the present application are for the purpose of permitting an external device, that is only temporarily used with a permanently installed medical imaging apparatus, to be serviced from a remote location through the same remote service location that is used to remotely

service the permanently installed components of the installed apparatus. A permanently installed medical apparatus has a number of basic components, the most basic being the gantry, that are always used to operate the imaging apparatus. For different types of examinations, however, it is often necessary to temporarily connect an external device to these permanently installed components. An example that is provided in the present specification is the use of a power contrast agent injector, which is used for angiography examinations, for example, but is not necessary for generating conventional x-ray images or conventional tomographic images.

Conventionally, when servicing of such a temporarily connectible component has been necessary, either a service call had to be made by a service technician, or the device had to be shipped to a service location, since the individual device itself, being a small component, is not equipped itself with the hardware or software necessary for remote servicing thereof.

In accordance with the present invention, while this external device is temporarily connected to at least one of the permanently installed devices of the installed medical imaging apparatus, the communication link that is used to remotely service the permanently installed apparatus can also be used to remotely service the external device, while that device is temporarily connected to at least one of the permanently installed components.

In previous rejections based on the Shiraishi reference, the Examiner has relied on the gantry thereof as, according to the Examiner, conforming to the "external device" as set forth in the claims. The method claims have already explicitly stated that the external device is temporarily connected to the permanently

installed apparatus, and this temporary connection has now been explicitly claimed in independent claim 1. As noted above, if any component is considered to be a “basic” component of a permanently installed medical imaging system, it is the gantry thereof. Those of ordinary skill in the field of medical imaging would never consider a gantry to be a “temporarily connected” device. A medical imaging apparatus that includes a gantry simply cannot be operated without the gantry being present, and therefore, in such an apparatus, there is not even the possibility of “temporarily” connecting the gantry to other permanently installed components. The gantry is *always* connected to those components.

The Examiner has now relied on the Gregerson et al reference as disclosing a mobile x-ray apparatus. Applicant acknowledges that the gantry in the Gregerson et al reference is mobile, but this does not somehow “convert” the gantry in either the Shiraishi reference or in the Gregerson et al reference to an external device that is temporarily connectible to at least one permanently installed component of the medical imaging apparatus. Even in the Gregerson et al reference, the gantry is always used and thus is always connected to the other components. The fact that the gantry, or the overall apparatus, is mobile in the Gregerson et al reference is completely irrelevant to the subject matter of the present application.

More importantly, since the gantry in both the Shiraishi and Gregerson et al references is always present and is always available for connection to a remote servicing site, there is no need to create a special communication path to the gantry for such servicing, since such a servicing communication path is already present.

Therefore, even if the Shiraishi system were modified in accordance with the teachings of Gregerson et al, the subject matter of claims 1, 8, 11 and 12 still would not result.

Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Shiraishi and Gregerson et al, further in view of an article by Fratt. Claims 3 and 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiraishi and Gregerson et al, further in view of Bonissone et al. Claims 4 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiraishi in view of Gregerson et al and Bonissone et al, further in view of a Dell website. Claims 6, 7, 9 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Shiraishi in view of Gregerson et al, further in view of the Dell website.

These rejections are respectfully traversed for the same reasons discussed above with regard to the independent claims. Since the Shiraishi/Gregerson et al combination does not disclose the basic content of any of the independent claims, modifying that combination in accordance with the teachings of any of the aforementioned secondary references still would not result in the subject matter of any of the aforementioned dependent claims.

All claims of the application are therefore submitted to be in condition for allowance, and early reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or to credit any overpayment to account No. 501519.

Submitted by,

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